

[Amos Farrell]

October 13, 1939

Amos Farrell (Farmer)

Huntersville, N. C.

Mary P. Wilson, Writer

Dudley W. Crawford, Reviser Original Names Changed Names

Amos Ferrell Andy Harrell

Farrelltown Harrelltown

Charlotte Riverton

Bobby Jimmie

Rocky River Rudy Fork

Huntersville Hinesville C9 - N.C. Box 1.

The one-arm man was making record time picking cotton. Occasionally he would straighten up and urge the young boy, who was helping, to greater speed.

"Better watch out, Bobby, or I'm apt to beat you to the end of the row."

"I don't care." Bobby answered in a slightly worried tone as the little hands began to hurry with their task.

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"How're you, Mr. Harrell?" I greeted him.

"I ain't seen Mr. Harrell," the man replied, 'but if you are aiming your conversation at me-well, you ain't never seen Andy when he wasn't feeling fine. Guess I don't know how to feel any other way.

"Who's your helper?" I asked.

"Who? Oh, you mean Bobby. He is my brother's boy. He's so quiet I almost forget he's along. I like to have children around me. I used to have hopes of having a big family of my own, but I's getting to too old for that now." Andy pushed his cap back and scratched his bald head. The only hand he had was large and the veins seemed ready to burst.

"Andy would you mind telling me your life story and how you lost your arm?"

"What arm? who's lost a arm?" he asked, looking all around. "Well I declare thats the first time I noticed that in year." Then he laughed untill the tears rolled down his 2 cheeks, "Don't mind me, child, that's my little joke and I like to play dumb.

"As for my life story; don't min mind telling telling you most of it, but there's some I'll not tell nobody.

"I was born here in Harriltown. The old store building I live in is on the town square. I know it doesn't even look like a wide place in the road now, but in the old days it was a great gathering place for the farmers for miles around. You see, good roads and automobiles took all the trade to towns that are bigger, lots of little country places have dried up. That old house I live in looks might mighty bad, a good strong wind would blow it over; but I like to live here because I got good neighbors. To look at me you'd think I was a beggar, but I got enough to live on the rest of my life if I never strike another lick.

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"You asked me about my arm and I tried to make a fool out of you, didn't I? Well, I got it burnt by a live wire when I worked on the street car line in Riverton. It's always been a mystery to me that I wasn't killed. None of the doctors around here could do anything for me and I had to go to New York. They had to saw that arm off four different times before they found fresh blood.

"I soon got used to doing without it, all the strength has gone to my other arm. I had a wrench in my hand when the accident happened and I've been feeling it ever since, just as plain as light. I can't get no job on public works, and sometimes I believe the farmers around here are glad of it.

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"You'd be surprised to know how many trees I can chop down in a day, and I can still pick as much as two hundred and fifty pounds of cotton in a day.

"The biggest trouble with me is I'd rather hunt than work. Right now my arm is itching to get hold of a gun and go hunting briar shoats.(rabbits) Believe me, when I throw up my gun them shoats might just as well lie down and die. Why, I've killed as many as four ducks at a time. It's been mighty hard for me to keep interested in this cotton picking, I been hearin so much shooting going on around here all day. I don't know as I've ever had spring fever, but I sure get the huntin fever.

"Naw, I ain't got no education; don't know B from bull's foot, don't see as I need it. When I was growing up we went to a little old one-room school about two months a year and learned to write and spell a little, and figure; but now, what they got? Big steam-heated brick buildings, haul the kids in buses; all of them carrying enough books to make them stoop-shouldered, and when they get through school they ain't worth their salt, so far as making something is concerned. They wouldn't think of doing the kind of work I've always done, and that's one thing's the matter of the world to-day- not enough willing hands. What they need is some sense hammered into their heads, not education.

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"I didn't aim to tell you anything about my marriage, but guess it won't hurt much more than I've already been hurt. I've got a wife living up here on Reedy Fork. I didn't know 4 what I was letting myself in for when I got married, but I soon found out. She aimed to do away with me so she could get my money. She had me put in the asylum, but I fooled her about the money. I had it hid and she couldn't find it. I slipped off from the asylum- guess the guards knew I wasn't crazy- and come back home and run her off. Maybe I should be in the asylum now; there are a lot of people I know ought to be. Anyway, I was sane enough to bide that money where she couldn't find it. I am out now and I wish there was some way to investigate the way the insane are treated. Reckon they think it don't make any difference how they handle them; but you see I was not crazy and I saw a lot. I can't do anything about it; everybody around here still call we "Crazy Andy".

"I've got a lot of wood on my place. I haul a load to town three times a week. I've got a little old truck and it takes just a little more than a gallon of gas to make the trip. I'm not satisfied unless I'm busy at something. Tell you what I'll do, I'll kill you a mess of briar shoats pretty soon if you'll cook them and let me come over fer dinner. You see, I get awfully fed-up on my own cooking. It must agree with me, though. I keep healthy all the time, just as if I figured all the vitamins, or whatever it is you hear so much about. I manage to eat a lot of vegetable along with the tremendous amount of meat I eat.

"Yes, I suppose I have religion of a sort, but I don't pay much attention to preachers, most of them don't know what they are talking about, anyway. I figure that any man with 5 sense enough to grease a gimlet knows right from wrong, and he don't need no parson yelling at him all the time about something none of us understand. I got just as much religion as the preachers, leastwise it [sreves?] my purpose mighty well. I certainly don't get into no trouble like that preacher did up here at Hinseville. He's in the middle of a big scandal about running around with another man's wife, and him with a wife and bunch of kids of his own. I heard a man say once that you should love your neighbor as yourself but leave his wife alone. That's my policy and I didn't learn it at no church I don't know what they'll say

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about me when I'm gone, but they can't say I ever hit below the belt or refused to give help when it was deserved and I could give it.

“Naw, I don't contribute to the church, I give mine direct where I know it'll do the most good. One trouble about the church is they try to do too much, they are organized to death; got too much overhead. I ain't been in one in years, but I know about what they do. Sometimes they come around asking for mission money. Tell me, what the name of God I want to be sending money to Chiny, Africay or some place I don't know nor care nothing about, when I can do a hundred cents worth of good with my dollar right here at home, among people I know and folks that maybe we can make something out of.

“Well lady, I got to get at this cotton picking. Time I get this done it'll be time to sow wheat, then I got to do my plowing for next year 'fore the winter sets in. Remember, now, I'm depending on you to cook them shoats; I'll kill a mess just as soon as it's cold enough to kill their fleas and ticks.”